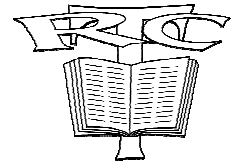


# RTC Monthly

No. 32 – 5 May 2009



## College News

- The RTC's library resources have been strengthened by the addition of two online databases. ATLA online provides access to over 1.6 million bibliographic records relating to a wide range of theological issues and indexing over 1,633 globally published journals. ATLASerials provides the full text of over 80 journal titles in religion and theology. These will be great research tools for staff and students, giving easy access to a vast array of theological information.

## Christian Worldview

We constantly make decisions that reflect how we express our Christian faith in everyday life. In our work, our studies, our recreation and our family life we make choices that will either bring glory to God or dishonour his name. The recognition that there is no neutral middle ground is at the heart of the Christian worldview. But what is this Christian worldview? How is it developed? How does it help us to live the Christian life? These questions, and many others, will be treated in the *Christian Worldview* course offered by the RTC online this coming semester (starting July 13).

The *Christian Worldview* course is particularly useful for people who wish to prepare for further studies, whether this is in the area of theology and ministry, or the arts, science, engineering, medicine, law or whatever.

Specifically the course will deal with:

1. The nature of worldviews
2. Examples of worldviews (e.g. Naturalism, New Age, Buddhism, Islam)
3. The development of a Christian worldview
4. The application of Christian worldview thinking

Students will be expected to study 24 lessons (two lessons a week), to participate weekly in the Forum, complete quizzes and write assignments based on required readings. A final exam will be given at the end of the course.

The *Christian Worldview* course can be taken at either degree or graduate diploma level, or students can just opt to audit it (which means you can participate in all the discussions and exercises but not take the final exam). For information on cost, contact the RTC office and for more details on the course go to [www.refstudy.org](http://www.refstudy.org), or contact the teacher, Dr Bill Berends, at [bberends@rtc.vic.edu.au](mailto:bberends@rtc.vic.edu.au)

## RTC Board Report

The RTC Board met at the College on Friday 24 April. Some key items of discussion are outlined here:

- The Search Committee will continue to look for a suitable missions lecturer, but will do so by approaching individuals and working through useful contacts rather than re-advertising. The Board recognized that it was important to “fish in the right places” as the theological position of a lecturer is a crux issue. The position description was also broadened to include some networking and engagement with churches engaged in church-based theological education.
- The new model of ministry training combining church-based study with on-campus study at the RTC was discussed extensively. The new model has been named **TASK 3**, and an initial paper outlining how it could work has been sent to churches of the CRCA in preparation for their Synod next week. The new model is a proposed second training pathway to ordained ministry. It will need to have approval of supporting churches before it can be used and it still needs to be further developed with input from churches. The model, while aimed at providing another pathway to ordained ministry, will also open up other training options for churches seeking to equip their members for various areas of service. Over the coming months there will be ongoing discussions and communication with churches on **TASK 3** in a variety of contexts.
- The Board received financial reports indicating that 2008 had been a very strong year, for which thanks was given to the Lord. The Board also acknowledged the hard work of Simon Edwards, our Business Manager, and Angie Almond, our Administrative Secretary, both of whom oversee the finances on a day to day basis.
- Steps are being taken to strengthen the College's ministry to Geelong churches and the region of Western Victoria. The RTC Board has approved a model in which, under the RTC Board, a new ministry facility of the College will be developed, operating with a different name and given direction by an Advisory Board with representation from local Geelong churches. We hope the new venture will begin early in 2010. It really is a great opportunity to offer biblical and theological training to local churches.

## Faculty News

- A number of sermons by faculty members can now be accessed online from Sermon Audio. To find a sermon by one of the RTC faculty members click on this link: <http://www.sermonaudio.com/rtc>
- Faculty members will be involved in the CRCA Synod from 11-15 May. The CRCA is a major supporting denomination of the College, and we will be interacting with them on issues relating to the College's future, as well as contributing to the morning devotions and to debate on other matters before the Synod.
- Straight after Synod Murray Capill heads down to Tasmania to speak at the Rural Bible Network conference held in northern Tasmania. Then in early June Henk de Waard returns to Makassar (Indonesia) to speak at a Ministers' Retreat of the South Sulawesi Christian Church. He will also teach at the Study Centre, which has been established by Middle East Reformed Fellowship, with a view to bringing the Gospel to the Bugis people of that region.

## Ministry Spot...

(by Dr Murray Capill)

A few weeks ago I was on a flight from Melbourne to Hobart with Alastair McEwen, our Vice-Principal, sitting next to me. I like flying with Alastair because he's not too big (always an issue on a plane) and he doesn't talk all the time (another issue on a plane). So in no time I found myself thinking, which is what invariably happens as soon as I fly out of Melbourne. Somehow leaving behind the regular routines of a tightly packed life and the demands of work and family, allows mental space that is conducive to more lateral thinking than usual. It has been one of the most valuable fringe benefits of much travel.

On this occasion my thoughts turned to the issue of personal time management. It was a needed area of reflection. The previous few weeks had been much too pressured, and the simple fact is, some of the most important things in ministry cannot happen amid ceaseless busyness. It is not possible to pray well in a rush. It is not possible to think creatively on the fly. It is not possible to produce good sermons on demand. It is not possible to stay fit and healthy if you are constantly stressed. It is not possible to put your family first if work consumes you. Mark Driscoll rightly observes in his book, *Confessions of a Reformation Rev.*, "I am a Christian first. Husband second. Daddy third. And pastor fourth."

Yet despite these well-known facts, Christian ministry has a way of running our lives. Most of the things we are asked to do are so worthwhile it is hard to say no. Everyone else around us is just as busy, so it is hard to pass things off to anyone else. The culture we live in also teaches us to evaluate worth by output, and importance by busyness. Eugene Petersen may begin his book *The Contemplative Pastor* with a chapter on "The unbusy pastor" but for most pastors that is an oxymoron, and for

most congregations it is exactly what they don't want. They want a pastor who visits both the healthy and the sick, attends many meetings, counsels needy people, leads the church, evangelizes the unsaved, manages and administers the church, shows hospitality, and preaches dynamic, life-changing messages.

So the time battle is on. Of course you can read another book about time management (if you can find the time to do so), but at the end of the day you have to actually make some changes. *You* have to make them, because the people around you won't make them for you. You also need to make your own list of needed changes, because we each struggle with different issues.

That's why on the plane I jotted down seven things for myself that I realized I needed to change – not massive changes, but I think helpful ones for my current situation. Chances are I will need to make another list in six months time. But for now I have resolved, 1) not to deal with emails in the mornings and, after a quick check of what is there, to leave "Outlook" off until later in the day (because dozens of emails can take ages to deal with, and the faster you deal with them the more they come in); 2) to develop more structure in my morning devotion, especially prayer (because my overly busy mind had made my prayer life much too random); 3) to work from home for at least half a day a week (to break out of the rut of an office environment and create more space to think); 4) to mark out in my diary preparation time for upcoming speaking engagements (because I constantly make the mistake of blocking out time for the engagement and a day or so beforehand, but not preparation time two or three weeks in advance before the organizers ask for titles, outlines etc.); 5) to mark out a two-week study block (so that I can actually do some of my own reading and writing instead of just producing for the next lecture or sermon); 6) to increase time for recreation by marking it in my diary as an appointment (otherwise it gets squeezed out and I don't want to become overweight and lethargic, which is what happens without exercise); and 7) to allocate some time to reading a couple of evenings a week (even if it is only a few pages or a chapter).

That just happens to be my list. Maybe you need to make one too. Maybe you need a few hours away just to think about how you are using your time. Yes, we are called to work hard for the Lord. But I don't think we are called to lead frenetically busy lives in which we are always on the edge of burnout.

Someone said they'd rather burn out than rust out. I'd rather not do either.